

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Census Bureau reports more than one in ten Connecticut children in poverty; over one in ten residents uninsured**

***Coalition calls on CT Congressional delegation to avoid severe federal funding cuts that would increase numbers of poor and uninsured***

Findings released today from two national surveys by the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that more than one in ten Connecticut children are in poverty and over one in ten residents are uninsured. The findings are released as Congress considers severe cuts to federal programs that help to lift families out of poverty. Connecticut Voices for Children and a diverse coalition of 40 Connecticut organizations called on the state's Congressional delegation to reject proposed federal cuts to programs that help families in poverty-wage jobs to better afford health care, food, and other basic needs.

Census data from the American Community Survey show that 10.5% of Connecticut children under 18 (87,000 children) in 2004 lived in families with incomes under the Federal Poverty Level (\$18,850 for a family of four), unchanged from 2003 levels. The 2004 Connecticut child poverty estimate represents no progress over the 1990 child poverty rate of 10.4%, despite record-low unemployment in the 1990s and an aggressive effort to move welfare recipients into the workplace. Among children under age 5, 11.1% (23,000 Connecticut children) were in poverty. Among all residents, 7.6% (257,000 residents) had income below the poverty level.

In addition, the Census Bureau reported that 11.6% (407,000) of Connecticut residents in 2004 were without health insurance coverage for the entire previous 12-month period. This was an increase of 50,000 residents over 2003 (though this change was not statistically significant). Among Connecticut children under 18, 8.5% (71,000 children) were uninsured for the entire year, unchanged from the previous year, despite signs of an improving Connecticut economy. In Connecticut, 74.3% of residents were covered by employer-based or privately-purchased insurance in 2004.

Nationally, 15.7% of Americans were uninsured (45.8 million), similar to the 2003 rate (15.6%). Eight in ten uninsured Americans come from working families, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. However, 81% of uninsured workers are employed by firms that do not offer health benefits or are not eligible for their employer's plan.

“In the nation’s wealthiest state, parents who are working full-time should have sufficient funds for decent housing, a good education, quality child care, and health care for their children” said Doug Hall, Associate Director of Research at Connecticut Voices for Children. “Yet the thousands of Connecticut families holding jobs that pay poverty wages or that don’t offer health insurance benefits find that -- no matter how hard they work -- there’s not enough income to make ends meet.”

The Census findings are released as Congress considers severe reductions in federal programs that effectively help lift families out of poverty, including Medicaid and Food Stamps. These major program changes are accompanied by proposals to permanently repeal or severely cut the federal estate tax, which would reduce federal revenues by as much as \$1 trillion over the first 10 years of repeal, yet benefit only the very wealthiest Americans. Congress is expected to vote on key budget legislation beginning as early as the first week in September.

Connecticut Voices for Children, along with a diverse coalition of 40 organizations in the state, called on Connecticut’s Congressional delegation to:

- Oppose the program changes and funding cuts now being considered by the U.S. House and Senate that would fall most heavily on low income children and their families, and other vulnerable populations.
- Protect initiatives like Medicaid and Food Stamps that have proven track records of promoting the health and well being of hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents.
- Support a balanced approach to federal deficit reduction that includes retaining the federal estate tax and reversing tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, rather than only cutting federal programs that help the most vulnerable.

“We ask our Congressional delegation to stand up for the people of Connecticut and press for a balanced approach to federal deficit reduction. This means minimizing cuts to programs that provide vital services to children and families who need them – services like health care and access to food – while reducing windfall tax breaks to our very wealthiest citizens,” said Ellen Scalettar, Senior Policy Fellow at CT Voices for Children.

“It is both morally and economically imperative that Connecticut reduce the number of its children whose development is handicapped by the multiple burdens of poverty – unsafe homes and communities, poor health and nutrition, and inadequate education. In this fiercely competitive global economy, Connecticut can’t afford to ‘bench’ 10% of its farm team in this way. Connecticut has the means to provide *all* its children with the tools necessary to reach their full potential. The question is whether it has the wisdom. Our future lies in their hands, after all,” commented Shelley Geballe, President of CT Voices for Children.

As one would expect from the state with the highest per capita income in the nation, Connecticut’s child poverty rate compares favorably to other states, and is the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in the United States. Nationally, 18.4% of children and 13.1% of all Americans were under the federal poverty level in 2004. Connecticut’s 2004 median family income was \$73,458, which ranked 2nd highest among all states, behind New Jersey.

National and state-level data on poverty, income, and health insurance coverage are available on the U.S. Census Web site at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). Data are drawn from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and American Community Survey (ACS). **CT Voices has cited ACS data for poverty and income figures, because ACS may present more reliable estimates for a small state like Connecticut.**

Connecticut Voices for Children ([www.ctkidslink.org](http://www.ctkidslink.org)) is a research-based policy and advocacy organization committed to promoting leadership, policy change, and investment on behalf of all of Connecticut's children and youth.

<b>Poverty/income indicator &amp; data source</b>	<b>Connecticut 2004 % and #</b>	<b>Connecticut 2003 % and #</b>	<b>United States 2004 % and #</b>	<b>United States 2003 % and #</b>
Persons with income less than Federal Poverty Level (ACS)	7.6% (257,229)	8.1% (272,911)	13.1% (37,161,510) significant increase	12.7% (35,846,289)
Children under 18 with income under FPL (ACS)	10.5% (86,736)	10.9% (90,857)	18.4% (13,245,202) significant increase	17.4% (12,673,283)
Median family income in 2004 dollars (ACS)	\$73,458	\$71,405	\$53,692	\$53,631

<b>Uninsured indicator &amp; data source</b>	<b>Connecticut 2004 % and #</b>	<b>Connecticut 2003 % and #</b>	<b>United States 2004 % and #</b>	<b>United States 2003 % and #</b>
Children uninsured, entire previous 12 months (CPS)	8.5% (71,000)	8.3% (71,000)	11.2% (8.3 million)	11.4% (8.4 million)
Persons uninsured, previous 12 months (CPS)	11.6% (407,000)	10.4% (357,000)	15.7% (45.8 million)	15.6% (45 million)

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov))*

*Unless specifically noted in the comparison charts above, there were no statistically significant changes in most indicators from 2003 to 2004. The estimate of children in poverty is an estimate for all children, not only "related children." CT Voices has used CPS data for estimates on the uninsured, since the ACS does not gather this data.*

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